

VZCZCXRO6100
PP RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #0769/01 0800710
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 210710Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2309
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 000769

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

NEA/I FOR TBETTS, WVEEMS

E.O.12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [KDEM](#) [KCOR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: Guidelines for PRT and MND/BCT Engagement with Newly Elected Provincial Officials

REFS:

- A) 2/2/09 Provincial Coordination Meeting
- B) Joint Campaign Plan
- C) Operations Order 09-01

11. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified; handle accordingly. Not for distribution on the Internet.

12. (SBU) Summary: This message provides guidelines for PRT and MND/BCT engagement with newly elected provincial officials. This guidance is being issued to assist PRT and MND/BCT personnel as they adjust to a changing post-provincial elections/post-Strategic Agreement political landscape. The seating of new provincial councils will initiate what may be a turbulent period of transition as local governments negotiate new power-sharing modalities with Baghdad accordaQ?K=.47.QQIQQteam leaders should be the first USG personnel to engage with newly elected provincial officials. PRT team leaders should coordinate these initial contacts with the PRT's USAID representative and the U.S. military commander. If military officials accompany PRT team leaders on their initial calls, this should be undertaken in such a way that it is clear to Iraqi interlocutors and possible media representatives that the PRT team leader is the central USG representative in the province for non-security related issues.

15. (U) PRT team leaders should engage early with newly elected officials and reiterate the USG's message that we are there to offer technical assistance and that we are coordinated in our efforts. They should explain the role of the PRT/ePRTs and team members; how they deal with officials and others within the province; the PRT/ePRTs' objectives; what assistance the USG can offer; and which activities are underway.

16. (U) PRT team leaders will introduce the PRT USAID representative Q6. (U) PRT team leaders will introduce the PRT USAID representative as the lead USG development coordinator within the province. The PRT USAID representative will explain USAID-funded programs and resources and how they assist the Iraqi people and provincial government.

17. (SBU) PRT team leaders will introduce U.S. Military Commander as the leader of the supporting element for the PRT/ePRT efforts within the province and the USG entity that leads support in security and stability operations. Stability operations are defined as those kinetic and coordinated (with the PRT) non-kinetic activities determined necessary by the U.S. military commander to support security operations. U.S. military elements should not engage directly with newly elected governors and provincial council members on civil capacity efforts without coordinating beforehand through the PRT. The U.S. military will engage and encourage/mentor their ISF counterparts to inform elected officials on issues that relate directly to security, the development of provincial security plans and stability operations support. IA/IP/DBE commanders should clearly identify and define the security and stability operations within the province for the elected officials and what support U.S. forces and governmental organizations provide the provincial

government and Iraqi security forces. U.S. military commanders should inform PRT team leaders of significant security engagements.

¶18. (U) Embassy political POCs on political engagements are POL Deputy Political Counselors Steve Walker and John Fox (WalkerSC@state.gov / FoxJ@state.gov), and OPA Political Officer Bonnie Long (LongBD@state.gov).

Provincial Powers Law (PPL) Implementation

¶19. (SBU) PPL implementation will doubtless vary from province to province, according to local politics, custom and the closeness of the relationship between the province and the central government. PPL interpretation and implementation is a matter for Iraqis. The USG should not be seen as taking sides in politically sensitive debates on these subjects. This includes offering opinions on these subjects when asked. Any assistance should be supportive not directive.

¶110. (SBU) Concerning the PPL, PRTs/MNDs/BCTs should coordinate closely through their respective chain of command within the Embassy and refer for guidance to Embassy-drafted and cleared materials. The Embassy developed a "PPL Road-Show" that provides in-depth briefings for interested PRT/ePRT personnel on the substance and political aspects of the new law. Details will be sent within the next two weeks.

¶111. (SBU) USAID, through its Local Governance Program III program, has the Embassy lead on providing technical and capacity-building assistance to the PPL - mandated (Article 45) High Commission for Governorate Affairs. POL, through CLA, will have the lead on providing technical assistance related to the Constitution Article 105-mandated regions and governorates committee and efforts to establish a Federation Council (which, when created, will be parliament's upper house). USAID and POL/CLA will consult closely to ensure coordinated, effective assistance.

¶112. (U) Embassy POCs on PPL implementation and coordinated PPL activities for the newly elected officials are April Powell-Willingham (powell-willinghama@state.gov) in CLA, Steve Walker (WalkerSC@state.gov) in POL and Julie Koenen-Grant (jkoenen-grant@usaid.gov) in USAID.

Governance Programming

¶113. (SBU) The Embassy, in coordination with POL, OPA, USAID, CLA, Treasury and MNF-I, will provide guidance on governance training and assistance to the newly elected provincial officials.

¶114. (U) USAID's LGP III team will provide direct capacity development to provincial governments - provincial councils, governors and their staffs -- in 11 provinces: Baghdad, Basra, Babil, Ninewa, Wasit, Karbala, Najaf, Salah ah Din, Diyala, Anbar and Maysan. The direct capacity-development program will provide orientations, as requested, to new provincial councils, governors and staff. In addition, assistance that combines training with mentoring will address budgeting, public investment planning, service delivery and performance improvement, oversight functions, development of professional provincial staffs, and support to the Local Governance Association. LGP III will initially provide indirect support to the provinces of Diwaniyah, Dhi Qar and Muthanna, in the form of reference and training materials and an orientation for the benefit of interested, newly elected PC members. Subject to funding, efforts will be made to expand direct capacity development via LGP III to Diwaniyah, Dhi Qar and Muthanna. LGP III will engage and coordinate with the PRTs in the work-planning phase. Qwill engage and coordinate with the PRTs in the work-planning phase of the project and will keep the PRTs informed of progress through briefings, discussions, and sharing of quarterly reports.

¶115. (U) USAID's Tatweer Program will provide training, coaching and

mentoring for provincial directors general, initially in six provinces and in seven key Baghdad ministries. Technical assistance will focus on three main areas: budget formulation and execution, project management and project life-cycles, and human resource development. Training in all six public administration and management core areas will be conducted at an advanced level. Trainers, who graduated from the Tatweer Training of Trainer classes, will disseminate the training to their colleagues in the provinces. Tatweer will work in close coordination with the PRT/ePRTs in the targeted provinces to maximize impact.

¶16. (U) USAID's Community Action Program (CAP) will work with grassroots community groups and provide governance assistance, in the non-KRG provinces, to Qada (district) and Nahiya (local) councils. CAP will coordinate with and share work-plans and

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quarterly reports with the PRT/ePRTs through the USAID representative to the PRT/ePRT.

¶17. (U) US Embassy Treasury's PFMAG has two roles in supporting provinces for budgetary training. The first role is to host a training conference in Baghdad that will include 5-7 Provincial Council officials from each province and will provide an overview of the budget process. It will also be an introduction to the issues provinces will be facing. The second is to conduct trainings in the provinces. For the provinces where USAID/LGP has a presence under the LGP III contract, PFMAG will only provide assistance when asked by LGP. For the provinces where LGP III is not working, PFMAG will provide budget training at the request of the PRTs. The agenda for the province-specific trainings will be tailored to the needs of the individual provinces.

¶18. (SBU) The Embassy's Anti-Corruption Coordinator's Office (ACCO) requests that PRTs engage on anti-corruption issues with newly elected Provincial Council members and other provincial and local officials as opportunities arise. Materials previously submitted to PRTs via e-mail can serve as a basis for PRTs' discussions of the anti-corruption dossier with officials. ACCO also plans to make periodic visits to the provinces for consultations with officials and participation in public outreach events as desired by the PRTs. One area that the provincial councils must pay attention to is the establishment of their own individual Gazettes, as stipulated in the PPL (Article 7). One means to fight corruption is for the council to write its own gazette law, making it as broad as possible. This can be done by requiring not only the councils own rules and laws be published but that of the governor and such things as contract notifications, internal policies, and so on. One of the first actions a council should consider is to publish its own rules of procedure thus locking in the right of the public to attend meetings. ACCO will subsequently provide a list of provincial offices for the (Iraqi) Commission on Integrity. ACCO is in the early stages of implementing anti-corruption projects with the United Nations and the University of Utah that involve strengthening the capacity of provincial and local authorities to combat corruption. ACCO will keep PRTs apprised of the development of these projects. ACCO will distribute additional anti-corruption related materials to you for use in engagements with newly elected officials.

¶19. (U) ITAO's Provincial Reconstruction Development Council Program will reorient to provide PRT's with tools to assistance and support the newly elected Provincial Council efforts to provide essential services to their populations. Executed through the PRTs, the program will be used as a capacity-building tool to assist the councils in developing their ability to plan, design, procure, contract and manage and sustain projects that will improve the equitable distribution of essential services and enhance their legitimacy at the same time as their capability to govern. In addition, ITAO will provide expertise through their senior consultants and/or by acquiring local or international experts to assist Councils in determining the feasibility of solutions connected with project-planning design or execution. In conjunction with the PRTs, ITAO will work with the newly elected Councils to institutionalize the skill sets required to maintain essential service infrastructure through targeted training programs that

directly meet the maintenance and sustainment needs identified by our Iraqi counterparts and the PRTs. There is a dire need for planning initiatives in the private spheres of the KR. But their opinions differ on whether these political parties have advanced the democratic process in the KRG. With few exceptions, students are dissatisfied with the current political status quo and seek greater participation in the socio-political development of the KR. END SUMMARY

POLITICAL PARTIES: TRAILBLAZERS OR ROADBLOCKS?

12. (U) Since the creation of the modern autonomous region, the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) have held heretofore unchallenged dominance of the political sphere in the Kurdistan Region (KR). Over the course of history, their influence has been critical of dominant party control of all political and socio-economic developments in the Kurdistan Region. They accused those parties of closing the larger political process to anyone not affiliated with the KDP or PUK and using any means necessary to prevent the development of a proper opposition party within the government. (Note: The KIU is the third largest political party in the KR, and received seven percent of the Kurdish vote in 2005. Although KIU influence is slowly growing, it does not constitute a threat to either of the two major parties.)

15. (U) Political party youth leagues are also extremely vocal on the issue of a future independent Kurdistan. Said a 23-year-old member of the KDP Youth League in Dohuk of the Iraqi federal system, "This union is a compulsory marriage and we want a divorce!" Some went so far as to suggest that those who call for additional steps toward decentralization (such as a plethora of strong political parties rather than the current two-party monopoly) are insensitive to the fact that the Kurds must remain unified if they will ever be able to secure an independent Kurdistan. Said another member of the KDP Youth League, "The most important goal is to be recognized as an independent nation. Once we are independent, we will be able to have more parties. But for now, we must unify against external threats instead of fighting against one another."

16. (U) The most critical students were those either not affiliated with political parties or affiliated in name only as a sort of "insurance policy." The variance in their opinions was reflected in the responses of the different groups to similar questions. Unaffiliated students cited unemployment, the lack of essential services and corruption as the issues of greatest significance, while political party youth league students replied Article 140 implementation, Kurdish independence and the upcoming legislative elections. (Note: Responses from the unaffiliated group track popular opinion more closely. During a recent youth-focused radio program on which RRT was a regular guest, 90% of callers' questions and comments were about fears of unemployment. End Note) Many youth admitted that as a student at the University of Sulaimaniyah, "The political parties do not really care for the problems and concerns of youth. The parties are struggling to maintain their influence in society and we are caught in the middle. Youth are used as tools in the party." Others believe that vested interests in the KRG are actively working against democratization and are incapable of moving democracy any further, since to do so would jeopardize the influence that [politicians'] have over socio-economic and political issues. (Note: RRT local staff persons remark that previously, students were much more receptive of political party ideology. RRT local staff believe that the change reflects the degree to which elected KRG officials have failed to keep campaign promises. End Note)

19. (U) COMMENT: Conversations at universities in Kurdistan can sound very similar to those at schools in developed countries. Youth here, like elsewhere, are eager to participate in a modern life that suits a youthful perspective, and take their place in society. Recent changes in the Kurdistan Region indicate that students may soon have a greater chance to do so. On February 11, the Kurdistan National Assembly lowered the minimum age of parliamentary officials from 30 to 25 and there is already competition for those seats. Whether these young people will be

able to affect change from within the system remains to be seen. END
COMMENT

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